

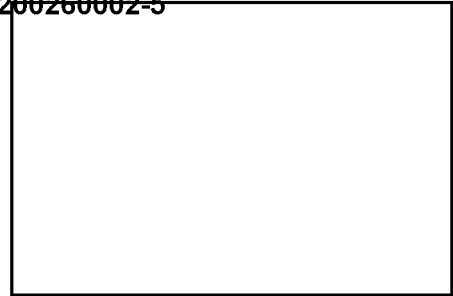


Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

Friday
30 March 1979

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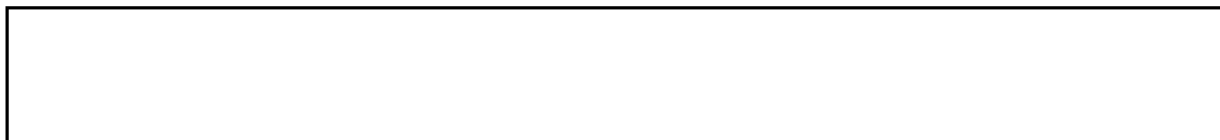
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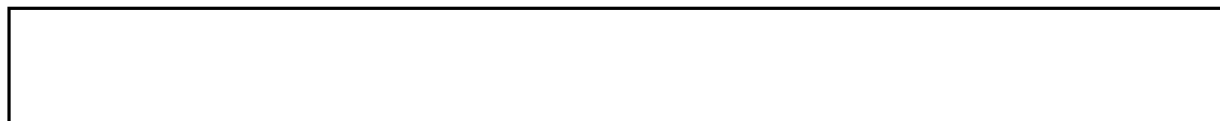


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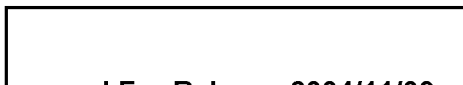
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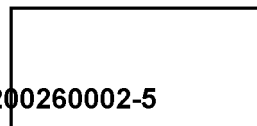
Overnight Reports 18

The Overnight Reports, printed on yellow paper as the final section of the *Daily*, will often contain materials that update the Situation Reports and Briefs and Comments.

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USSR: Current Thinking on MBFR

In a series of recent private meetings with senior US representatives to the talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, Soviet negotiators have sought US reactions to possible changes to the reductions proposal they made last June. Moscow is evidently looking for a way to end the current impasse resulting from conflicting Western and Eastern data on the number of Warsaw Pact personnel in the zone of potential reductions.

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The Soviet overtures began soon after the current round of talks resumed in early February; they may reflect a between-round decision in Moscow to test US receptiveness to a limited accord that focuses primarily on modest US and Soviet withdrawals. Such an accord would be more important politically than militarily.

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The Soviets have outlined a two-phase concept: The first phase would encompass two separate agreements with a duration of three to four years. The Soviets and the US would agree on partial troop withdrawals in a proportion of two to one, involving between 30,000 to 68,000 Soviets in exchange for between 14,000 to 29,000 US personnel. These withdrawals would take place during the first year. The second agreement of the first phase would be signed by all participants and would commit each not to increase existing force levels during negotiations on second-phase reductions. In the second phase, all participants would reduce their troop levels to a collective level of 900,000 ground and air force personnel for each side.

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The Soviets have indicated that the first-phase US-Soviet reduction would be based only on an agreed number of troops to be withdrawn. It would not involve an exchange of data on existing force levels nor would the limit on residual Soviet and US forces be specified numerically. Thus discussion of the issue of disputed Eastern and Western data would be postponed until after the initial US-Soviet withdrawals. If the two sides

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could not subsequently resolve the data dispute, the first-phase agreements would be permitted to expire.

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Although Moscow has broached many of these ideas before, the explicit offer of a bilateral US-Soviet agreement to be concluded separately from a general first-phase multilateral accord is a new aspect. The latest Soviet offer also reverses the thrust of the East's proposal in June, which called for reductions for all direct participants. The Soviets probably hope that deferral of the data dispute would set a precedent for agreeing on troop reductions without exchanging data on existing force levels.

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The nature of the recent US-Soviet discussions suggests that Moscow has not yet completely sorted out its thinking. In two of the last three meetings with US negotiators, the chief Soviet representative and his deputy have openly differed on specific points. Such behavior, even in informal exchanges, is unusual for Soviet negotiators. It may reflect lack of sufficiently detailed guidance from Moscow.

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The Soviets may perceive that a limited MBFR agreement would be a means of securing a more favorable political atmosphere in Europe at a time of deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations. They may also think that even in the absence of an agreement they might be able to provoke a divisive debate in NATO by exploiting growing West European frustration with the lack of progress in MBFR.

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ALERT MEMORANDUM

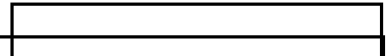
EGYPT-LIBYA

The Daily presents an Alert Memorandum on possible hostilities between Egypt and Libya. This memorandum was coordinated at the working level by CIA, DIA, and NSA.

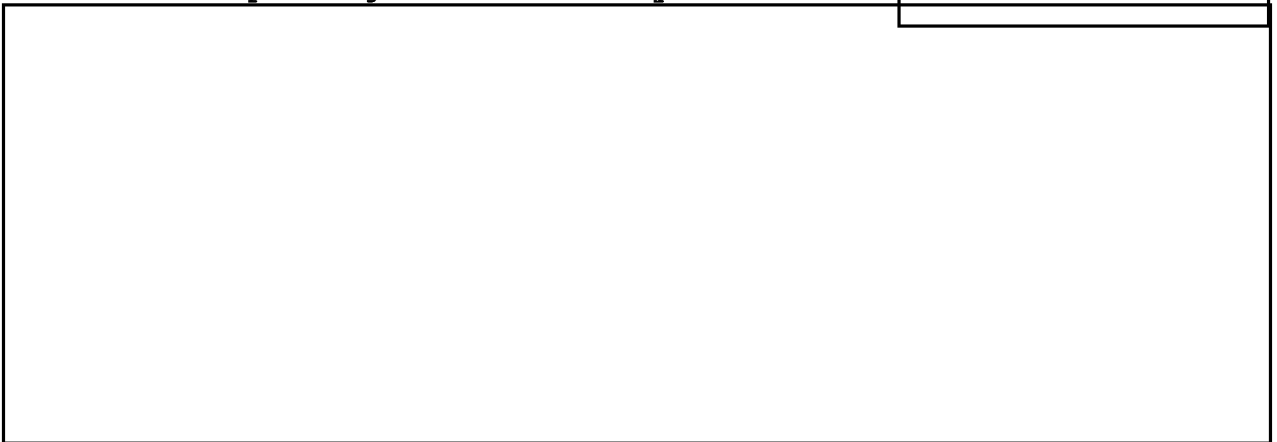


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During the past week Egypt and Libya have been augmenting their forces along their common border and have been improving their military readiness.



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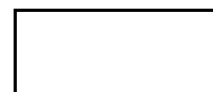
This heightened tension along the border increases the likelihood that war will break out there either by deliberate attack or by unpremeditated escalation of border incidents (as occurred in July 1977). A provocation by one side could be seized on by the other as an excuse to begin military operations.



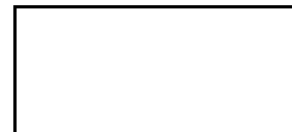
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A conflict between Libya and Egypt at this time could have serious adverse consequences:


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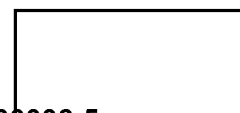
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- Unless there were convincing evidence that Libya had provoked the conflict, suspicions would be raised among Arabs and probably others that the US (and perhaps Israel) had sanctioned Egyptian military moves against Libya.
- Most of the Arabs would feel compelled to condemn Egypt, thus diminishing further the prospects of gaining the cooperation of Arab moderates in peace negotiations and the prospects of blunting implementation of sanctions against Egypt.
- Hostilities that were not brought on by a major Libyan provocation would be unpopular with Egyptians, thereby increasing popular apprehensions about Egypt's isolation in the Arab world and energizing Sadat's domestic opponents.
- The Soviet Union might decide to commit limited numbers of its pilots or air defense personnel already in Libya.
- It might prompt other Arabs--probably Syria and Iraq--to send troops to Libya in a show of solidarity. 

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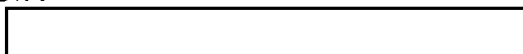
OVERNIGHT REPORTS

(The items in the Overnight Reports section have not been coordinated within the intelligence community. They are prepared overnight by the Office of Current Operations with analyst comment where possible from the production offices of NFAC.)

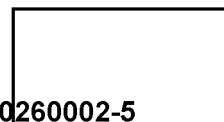
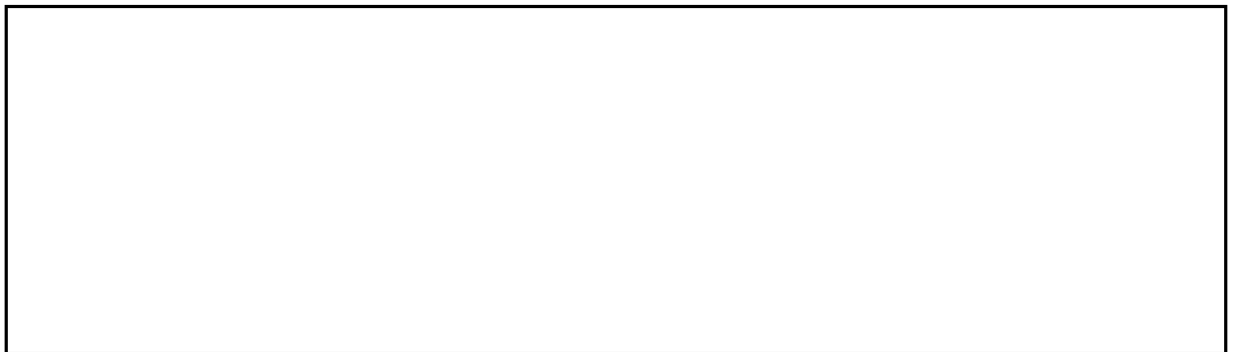
The Yemens

South Yemeni officials attending the summit meeting in Kuwait between the Presidents of North and South Yemen have told the press that the two sides have nearly completed work on a draft unity agreement. The press also has carried stories that Marxist South Yemeni President Ismail has offered to step aside in favor of North Yemeni President Salih as leader of a unified Yemen. 

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COMMENT: *The two sides signed a unity agreement in 1972 following a round of fighting between them. Neither capital took it seriously, although both sought to profit by going through the charade. Talks were held sporadically for several years but eventually collapsed under the weight of the two countries' ideological differences. A new agreement to unite does not seem likely to fare any better.* 

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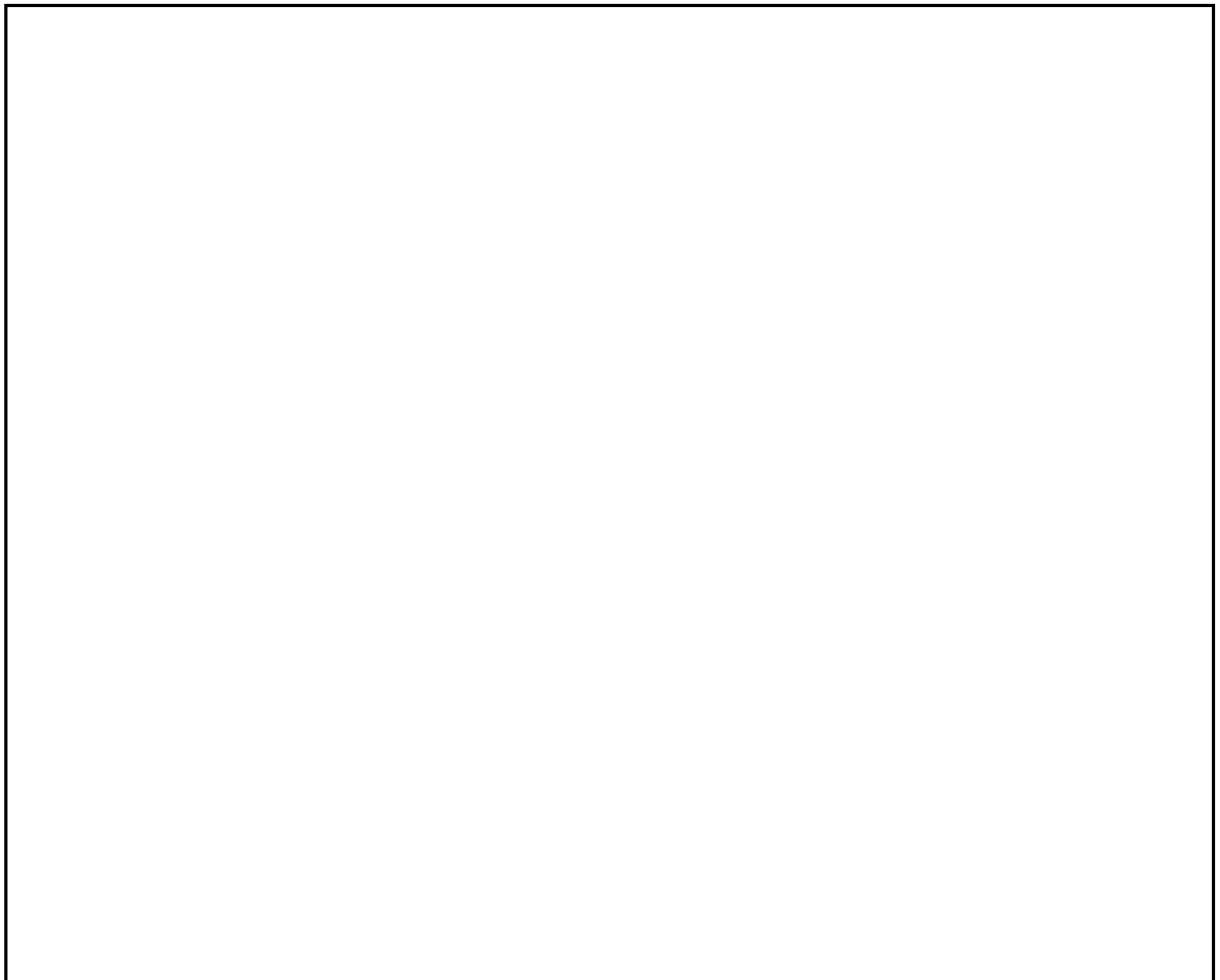


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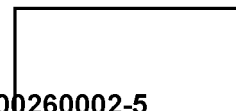
Egypt-Libya

The Egyptian Ambassador held hostage Tuesday in Bangladesh told the US Ambassador yesterday that he suspects the Libyan Ambassador of complicity in the abduction. According to the Egyptian diplomat, the Libyan Ambassador, who came to the chancery to assist in negotiations with the Iranian and Palestinian abductors, was consistently unhelpful and often preempted the kidnapers by speaking on their behalf. 

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Bolivia

President Padilla announced on radio and television yesterday that his government had foiled a plot aimed at thwarting elections planned for July to return the country to civilian rule. Padilla had dismissed former President Banzer and several other generals on Wednesday, although in his address he apparently did not link them with the alleged plot. 

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Tunisia

President Bourguiba left a Tunis army hospital yesterday after two days of examination at the hospital's cardiology ward, according to a Western news service. 

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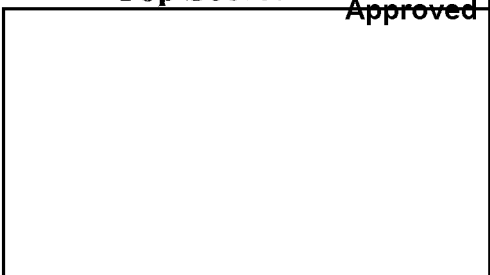
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